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Weekly Special Report



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INSIDE

USAID Provides Emergency Assistance to Ethiopia Flooding Victims

Dire Dawa, Ethiopia – August 17, 2006-

The people and the Government of the United States of America express their condolences to the people of Dire Dawa for the suffering caused by the flooding of the Dechatu river on August 6, 2006, in which over 250 people died, 300 people remain missing, 6,000 people were displaced, and more than 9,000 people are in need of emergency assistance.

In response to this trag-

edy, the U.S. government, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has already provided \$85,000 in humanitarian relief commodities and services for individuals affected by the disaster. Through partner agencies CARE, GOAL, Population Services International, and the International Rescue Committee, USAID has provided emergency food, mattresses, water containers, water treatment materials, and com-

modities to relieve the suffering of those displaced by the flooding. The food supplies (170 metric tons of wheat and rice) being distributed to flood victims by the World Food Programme, includes food provided by the U.S. government.

USAID's Mission Director, Mr. Glenn Anders, and staff and Commander Paul Vandenberg of the U.S. Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of

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United States, Partners Make Progress Against HIV/AIDS

By Charlene Porter
Washington File Staff
Writer

Washington – The combined efforts of a U.S.-backed global AIDS program and other international initiatives are bringing on a "tipping point" in the battle to quell the HIV/AIDS epidemic, according to the top U.S. HIV/AIDS official.

"[It is] the point at which we are seeing the epi-



Dr. Mark Dybul
Acting Global AIDS
Coordinator (GAC)

demic wane, the point at which we are finally gaining ground on this epidemic," said Dr. Mark Dybul, the acting global AIDS coordinator (GAC), who is responsible for overseeing the U.S. effort to assist other nations to fight the disease. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-eng>))

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United States Condemns Violence in Darfur

By Charles W. Corey
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States "strongly condemns" the violence in the Darfur region of Sudan and reiterates that a United Nations peacekeeping force should be deployed there without delay.

U.S. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack made that point August 10 in a statement released to reporters.

McCormack said violence in Darfur "continues to result in the deaths of humanitarian workers and innocent civilians and hinders the distribution of life-saving humanitarian assistance to areas of Darfur."

The United States calls on all groups in Darfur, he said, "to refrain from violent attacks, recognize their responsibilities and abide by the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) and the N'Djamena Cease-Fire Agreement." (See fact sheet (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/65972.htm>).)

"We urge all groups to cooperate fully with the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), adhere to United Nations Security Council resolutions, proceed with the full implementation of the DPA and respect international law as it pertains to protecting humanitarian workers and the innocent people of Darfur who have suffered for so long," McCormack said.

The United States is "firmly committed" to peace in Sudan, he added. "The DPA," he said, "provides the best opportunity for

lasting security, peace, reconciliation and reconstruction in Darfur" and accommodates the reasonable political, economic and security goals of the people of Darfur.

While recognizing the considerable efforts of AMIS in decreasing the large-scale, organized violence in Darfur, McCormack did acknowledge that "the situation has evolved and become much more complex and difficult."

Consequently, he added, a United Nations peacekeeping force must deploy without delay. "Only a large, robust, mobile and fast-reacting U.N. force is capable of stopping the violence and protecting innocent lives; supporting continued and full implementation of the DPA; and providing a safe and secure environment whereby internally displaced persons and refugees can return to their homes," he said.

The African Union consistently has called for transition of AMIS to a U.N. operation without delay, he pointed out. "Such a transition," he said, "should take place by October 1. We call on Sudan's Government of National Unity to immediately accept a U.N. peacekeeping force and for the U.N. to begin deploying its troops without delay."

Briefing reporters August 9, McCormack said the United States is "deeply engaged" on the Sudan issue. "It's something Secretary Rice spends time on, even in the midst of the crisis in the Middle East. It's something that she has been asking questions about and

thinking about, working with Jendayi Frazer, our assistant secretary for African affairs, who has the lead on it."

President Bush held talks on Darfur at the White House July 20 with Salva Kiir, first vice president of the Government of National Unity of Sudan and the president of the Government of Southern Sudan. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-eng-lish&y=2006&m=July&x=200607201725142jrgnik0.2719995>).)

Bush also met with Minni Minawi, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army leader, at the White House July 25 to discuss ways to broaden support for the Darfur Peace Agreement, facilitate its implementation and ensure expeditious deployment of U.N. peacekeepers to Darfur.

For more information, see Darfur Humanitarian Emergency (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/darfur.html>).

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USAID Provides Emergency Assistance to Ethiopia . . .

(Continued from page 1)

Africa (CJTF-HOA) are visiting Dire Dawa today to assess emergency needs, meet with the Mayor and representatives from the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Bureau (DPPB), and to make recommendations for additional assistance.

Among the most pressing humanitarian needs are the provision of shelter and sanitation services for

6,000 newly homeless individuals who are temporarily being housed in schools in the area. Suitable shelter must be found for them before school begins again. The United States is committed to assisting in providing shelter for the displaced population.

The U.S. Embassy will continue to monitor the situation and provide additional updates as necessary. For more information on USAID's disaster assistance program,

please visit our website: http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/. ♦

"Books for Africa" Helps Africa Fight "Book Famine"

By Elisa Walton
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- It only costs about 38 U.S. cents to give an African child access to a book. This is the claim made by Books for Africa (BFA), and one factor in its success.

The organization has shipped more than 10 million books to the continent since 1988 and in the past three years, has made significant progress in expanding Africans' access to books, taking its work to "the next level" in terms of scope and number of partners, said Patrick Plonski, executive director of the organization. BFA provides more donated textbooks to Africa than any other organization, he said.

Partners include the U.S. Agency for International Development

(USAID) and the U.N. World Food Programme. Some of the greatest help comes from Better World Books, which buys and sells books at universities around the United States. It donates 15 percent of its profits to BFA, and many of its surplus books as well, allowing BFA for the first time to distribute significant numbers of post-secondary textbooks. BFA also works with other used booksellers, such as Follett and Academic Book Services.

Through donations like these, BFA manages to keep its budget low but still have a large impact. Plonski estimates the 2006 budget at \$850,000, which translates into an estimated \$14 million worth of books being distributed throughout the continent, he said.

The greatest cost for BFA is shipping because volunteers keep

staffing costs low. The books mostly are sent in sea containers, each carrying about 22 tons of books. Transport for each container costs around \$10,000. BFA will ship about one container a week in 2007, Plonski said.

Much of the organization's funding comes from African nationals in the United States, as well as individuals "who have traveled to Africa, have seen the need, and are motivated to do something to help the children of Africa. You know, people go on a safari, and then they visit a school, and their hearts are moved by the experience," said Gena Doyscher, president of the group's board of directors.

Plonski agreed. There is a "direct linkage between tourism [in Africa] and a desire to help out," he said. For example, Tanzania is one of

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United States, Partners Make Progress Against . . .

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lish&y=2006&m=August&x=20060804111245cmretrop0.3929254).)

Dybul spoke in a digital videoconference with reporters in Canada, in the run-up to the opening of the XVI International AIDS Conference in Toronto August 13-18.

The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is the key program for delivery of U.S. assistance to nations struggling to combat the disease. In the two years since PEPFAR began, 120 nations have received U.S. support from the five-year, \$15 billion initiative, the largest commitment to address a single disease ever made by a single nation, according to the GAC office.

PEPFAR particularly targets 15 nations, which suffer some of the world's worst HIV prevalence rates. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/May/26-938305.html>).)

Since 2004, PEPFAR has provided anti-retroviral drug treatment (ARVs) to 561,000 people suffering from AIDS in the 15 target countries. Globally, international initiatives in which the United States is a partner have begun providing drug treatment to 1.3 million people, Dybul said.

The United States has supported prevention against mother-to-child HIV transmission during more than

4.5 million pregnancies. Through September 30, 2005, PEPFAR supported care for nearly 3 million people, including care for over 1.2 million orphans and vulnerable children.

PEPFAR also has facilitated prevention counseling on more than 13 million occasions. That effort is part of a comprehensive prevention approach designed to achieve an "AIDS free generation," Dybul said.

A Kenyan prevention program teaches teens that "you can actually abstain [from sexual activity] and it's cool," said Alice Wambugu, of the NimeChill campaign which is receiving PEPFAR backing. Wambugu, in Nairobi, Kenya, participated in the videoconference along with representatives of other nongovernmental organizations working against AIDS in Kenya with PEPFAR support.

A Uganda-developed prevention strategy known as "ABC" – abstinence, be faithful, condom use – has received significant attention, but Dybul said, the U.S. prevention scheme is more far-reaching than recognized and includes prevention of both sexual and mother-to-child transmission.

"We also support -- significantly -- efforts ... for safe blood, safe medical injections and underlying issues such as, alcohol, intravenous drug use and gender inequality that contribute to HIV spread," Dybul said.

Although some critics of PEPAR initiatives have said that the use of condoms should receive greater emphasis, Dybul responded, "The data are clear that you need all three components."

Dispelling the suggestion that the U.S. backed programs disfavor or discourage condom use, Dybul said PEPFAR has supported more than 475 million condom purchases in 2006, almost triple the number in 2001.

For additional information, see a fact sheet (<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/67502.pdf>) on the State Department Web site.

For more on U.S. efforts to combat the epidemic, see HIV/AIDS (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/hiv_aids.html).

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"Books for Africa" Helps Africa Fight . . .

(Continued from page 3)

the greatest beneficiaries, receiving 38 shipments to date, in part because of its natural beauty and the extent of tourism there. Many of these tourists sponsor donations to the country.

BFA began in 1988 with one such experience. Tom Warth, a successful publishing entrepreneur, decided to sell his business and travel. In Uganda, he visited a library with nearly empty shelves. Upon his return to the United States, he worked with Rotary Clubs, publishers, booksellers and librarians to send shipments of books to the Ugandan library and others.

"We just feel that this is the best thing that we can do to promote education for African children," said Doyscher. "We think it all starts with reading, and reading starts with having a book."

About 20 percent of the shipments go directly to Africa, from publishers donating new books. The rest of the books, from individual donations, go to the BFA warehouse in Minnesota, where they are sorted to ensure high quality -- no more than 10 years old, with no marks on them, and of useful or educational content.

The great majority of the books are in English, although BFA would like to offer more to Francophone countries. A recent partnership with Nathan publishers in France aims to accomplish this, with re-

cent shipments sent out to both Mali and Senegal.

More extensive, ongoing projects in Tanzania, Ethiopia, Kenya and Ghana are due to strong BFA partners there, which make it relatively easy to arrange shipments.

Partners in Africa, from nongovernmental organizations to Rotary Clubs and religious organizations, request their book preferences



from the list of available books, receive the deliveries and distribute the books.

BFA recently began working with U.S. embassies in Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Djibouti and Uganda, which help with distribution. Plonski also would like to expand cooperation with the Peace Corps, to take advantage of its extensive infrastructure.

A recent addition to the recipient countries is Liberia. Since the country's emergence from civil war, BFA has sent 23 shipments there. Most recently, a Liberian national wanted to sponsor a few

containers. That effort grew, with other donors signing on for a total of seven containers. "They can put those books to good use," said Plonski, to help rebuild Liberian society.

Doyscher sees "pretty much only growth ahead" for the organization. She recently returned from Abuja, Nigeria, where she distributed English dictionaries to school-

children. "The teachers and the children are absolutely thrilled," she said.

Additional information (<http://www.booksforafrica.org/index.html>) is available on the BFA Web site.

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U.S. Passports Move into a New Era

Washington – The U.S. Department of State began issuing electronic passports – e-passports – to the American public August 14 as another step in an ongoing program to enhance border security and to facilitate travel.

The new generation of passports includes biometric technology, a computer chip that contains the same data as those found on the biographic data page of the passport. Those data include name, gender, date and place of birth, and the passport's issue and expiration dates. The chip also includes a digital image of the bearer's photograph.

The document is scanned by border officials when the bearer presents it, and the data in the document are matched against that stored away in databases. Its design also is intended to defy forgery and falsification.

In a Washington File interview earlier in 2006, State Department Consular Affairs spokeswoman Laura Tischler said the United States is leading global efforts to ensure the e-passport "is a secure, globally interoperable document that meets [international] standards."

The International Civil Aviation Organization has devised standards for the making of passports in the digital age, and most nations now are redesigning their documents to comply with that standard.

Discussing the benefits of the e-passport, Tischler said the document prevents fraud and protects identity. "[I]f stolen, it makes it incredibly difficult for someone else to use your passport. [The e-passport] gives border inspectors a new tool to verify you are the person to whom a given government issued that document," she said.

The new U.S. e-passport also is designed to protect the privacy of the bearer, Tischler said. "The information contained on the integrated circuit embedded in the passport will not provide a means to track U.S. citizens. This information will be used only in identity verification at ports of entry during travel."

To prevent data written to the chip from being susceptible to unauthorized reading, Tischler said that "anti-skimming" shielding material has been incorporated in the passports front cover. That material prevents the chip from being read when the passport book is closed, she said.

Additional information (http://travel.state.gov/passport/eppt/eppt_2498.html) on the U.S. electronic passport is available on the State Department Web site.



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United States Breaks Up "Drug Pipeline" from Mexico

By Eric Green
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- U.S. law enforcement authorities have arrested 138 people in a case involving the shipment of a potent form of heroin from Mexico into the United States, according to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

In an August 15 statement, the DEA said an investigation called "Operation Black Gold Rush," involving a number of U.S. law enforcement agencies, exposed a network of illegal aliens that controlled a pipeline of "black tar" heroin operating from the Mexican state of Nayarit to Nashville, Tennessee, and at least 14 cities between those two points.

The DEA said black tar heroin gets its name from being dark and sticky in appearance, and is made from the opium poppy plant. The DEA said black tar heroin accounts for as much as 80 percent of the total heroin produced in Mexico. Black tar heroin can be smoked as well as injected, and is less expensive (at the street level) in the United States than other types of heroin, said the DEA.

To date, the United States has seized more than \$500,000 in cash representing illegal proceeds from the DEA-led Operation Black Gold Rush, as well as 17 kilograms of the black tar heroin.

Members of the trafficking organization that controlled the pipeline are alleged to have been responsible for importing and distributing about 10 kilograms to 15 kilograms of black tar heroin monthly from Mexico into the United

States. That amount of the drug could be sold at an estimated street value of more than \$3 million. Some of the cities involved in the trafficking group's operations included Indianapolis; Denver; Los Angeles and Riverside, California;



Charlotte, North Carolina; Columbia, Greenville, Charleston and Florence in South Carolina; and Phoenix.

The DEA alleged that the organization used illegal aliens as couriers, who were part of a "call and deliver" system of drug distribution whereby customers could have their heroin literally delivered to the front door. The organization's financial managers allegedly laundered the illicit proceeds using a combination of wire remitters and bulk currency transport, said the DEA.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has said that the United States and Mexico are both "absolutely committed" to combating the illicit narcotics trade.

During her trip to Mexico in March 2005, Rice said that within the "context of Mexico's own laws," that country has been a "very good partner" on counternarcotics

issues. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-eng-lish&y=2005&m=March&x=20050311124529AEnearG0.7562372&t=xarchives/xarchitem.html>).)

The U.S. State Department said in its 2006 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, released March 1, that Mexico is one of the largest producers of heroin consumed in the United States.

The report, covering the year 2005, said Mexican opium poppy growers used small, widely dispersed plots in remote, inaccessible regions of Mexico, including the Sierra Madre mountains, to avoid having their crops detected and eradicated. The section of the report pertaining to Mexico (<http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2005/vol1/html/42364.htm>) is available on the State Department Web site, along with more information on U.S. policy toward Mexico (<http://usinfo.state.gov/wh/americas/mexico.html>).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>.)

Cease-Fire in Lebanon "Important Step Forward," Bush Says

Washington -- President Bush, speaking at the State Department August 14, welcomed the adoption of the U.N. Security Council resolution on Lebanon and the implementation of a cease-fire in the region as "an important step forward" and said the next task is helping "people in both Lebanon and Israel return to their homes and begin rebuilding their lives without fear of renewed violence and terror."

Recalling the suffering of civilians in both countries during the recent weeks of violence, Bush said he believes that "responsibility for this suffering lies with Hezbollah," for its "unprovoked attack" against Israel that started the conflict. He also accused Hezbollah of "hiding behind civilians."

Bush also said Syria and Iran, as the state sponsors and supporters of Hezbollah, also share responsibility for the suffering of the Lebanese people. Hezbollah was "emboldened" by its state sponsors, and despite claims by both countries to the contrary, "sophisticated weaponry ended up in the hands of Hezbollah fighters, and many assume and many believe that that weaponry came from Iran through Syria."

The president said "the world must now recognize that it's Iranian sponsorship of Hezbollah that exacerbated the situation in the Middle East," and he accused Syria of supporting the organization in order to undermine Lebanon's democratic government and "regain its position of dominance in the country."

DEFEAT FOR HEZBOLLAH

However, Bush said the fighting had dealt a blow to Hezbollah, because it would no longer be able to operate freely in southern Lebanon, since Lebanese forces will be taking control of the area with the support of a "robust" international force, according to the terms set by the U.N. Security Council, and agreed to by the governments of Lebanon and Israel.

"[H]ow can you claim victory when at one time you were a state within a state, safe within southern Lebanon, and now you're going to be replaced by a Lebanese army and an international force?" Bush asked.

The president said the region now stands "at a pivotal moment in history," and the recent fighting showed the determination of extremists to prevent "modern societies from emerging" in the Middle East.

"Yet millions of people in Lebanon, Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere are equally determined to live in peace and freedom. They have tired of the false promises and grand illusions of radical extremists," he said, and reject their "hateful vision" in favor of a better future.

"We're determined to help them achieve that dream," he said.

He said the current challenge is to help young democracies in the region, such as Lebanon, Iraq, and Afghanistan, overcome their vulnerability to terrorists and their sponsors.

"One vulnerability is that many of the new democratic governments in the region have not yet established effective control over all their territory," he said.

Bush said his administration has a clear message to those opposed to the spread of democracy in the region. "America will stay on the offense against al-Qaida. Iran must stop its support for terror. And the leaders of these armed groups must make a choice. If they want to participate in the political life of their country, they must disarm. Elected leaders cannot have one foot in the camp of democracy and one foot in the camp of terror," he said.

The transcript (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/08/20060814-3.html>) of the president's remarks is available on the White House Web site.

For additional information, see Response to Terrorism (http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/terrorism.html).

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U. S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)♦

Trafficking an "Egregious" Form of Slavery, USAID Official Says

By Kathryn McConnell
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The estimated \$8 billion a year generated worldwide by the trafficking of humans are the tainted profits of "a most egregious form of slavery," according to Kent Hill, a senior health official with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Human trafficking is the world's third most lucrative illegal commercial activity, following trade in narcotics and weapons, added Lynn Sauls, another USAID official, who with Hill, addressed an August 10 meeting in Washington devoted to raising awareness of the transnational exploitative trafficking of an estimated 600,000 to 800,000 women, men and children every year.

Hill said the problem of human trafficking is "one of the most important issues of our time."

He said trafficking, what he called the "sale of human dignity," would be "inconceivable without demand" for prostitutes and cheap labor from people in rich countries.

Hill countered arguments that prostitution in developed countries and the cross-border industry known as "sex tourism" would decrease if governments legalized these activities.

There is "overwhelming evidence," he said, that victims of trafficking, many of whom are deceived by traffickers to think they are going to another country for a legitimate paying job and "a new life," would rather be involved in other activities that would lift them out of poverty.

Since 2001, the United States has supported anti-trafficking activities in more than 70 countries with programs tailored to the conditions of individual countries, according to a USAID report, *Trafficking in Persons: USAID's Response*, released in March.

In 2005, the United States provided more than \$21.3 million to support anti-trafficking activities, such as raising public awareness about the problem and helping victims reintegrate into society and find jobs.

Of that amount, countries in Europe and Eurasia received \$7.86 million; Latin American and Caribbean countries received \$7.58 million; countries in Asia and the Near East received \$3.4 million; and African countries received \$2.2 million, the report says.

USAID anti-trafficking initiatives have led to "significant buy-in" from local governments, according to Sauls, who works in USAID's office that concentrates on improving the lives of women who live in developing countries. Some jurisdictions have signed agreements with the United States promising to help trafficked victims safely return to their home countries and receive occupational training.

The efforts include refugee assistance, support for girls' education, and activities aimed at reducing violence against women and promoting women's rights, according to a second USAID report outlining the agency's anti-trafficking strategy.

Some initiatives also involve men delivering anti-trafficking messages

within their communities, Sauls said.

In addition, U.S. funding is supporting anti-trafficking training for law enforcement and judicial officials.

The commercial sex industry is an underlying cause of a significant segment of the world's human trafficking, but other victims often are sold into bondage as brick kiln and rice mill laborers, maids, child soldiers and camel-race jockeys, Sauls said.

In January, President Bush signed legislation reauthorizing funding for anti-trafficking efforts initiated in 2000. The bill is expected to provide \$361 million over the next two years to combat human trafficking and protect victims. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Jan/11-191763.html>).)

The U.S. State Department delivered a global survey of human trafficking in the annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* issued in June. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Jun/05-20237.html>).)

The USAID report (http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/pubs/usaid_antittraffic_final_508c_04_20_06.pdf) (PDF, 30 pages) on human trafficking is available on the agency's Web site.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>.)

Majority of Iraqi Police Trained, Equipped, General Says

Washington -- Iraqi Interior Ministry forces have reached 92 percent of a planned strength of 188,000 troops, the commander of the coalition's Civilian Police Assistant Training Team says.

The Iraqi police included in that total are 90 percent trained and 83 percent equipped, according to Major General Joe Peterson. The National Police, which used to be called the Special Police, are 98 percent trained and 92 percent equipped, he continued. Peterson briefed along with Army Major General William Caldwell, spokesman for Multi-National Force - Iraq, from Baghdad, Iraq, August 14 via videoconference to the Pentagon.

Also included under the Interior Ministry are Department of Border Enforcement police, which are now 92 percent trained though just 56 percent equipped, Peterson said. He explained that the border police lag because resources have gone more to those forces in contested areas.

"[W]e estimate that all of this will be completed by December of this year [2006]," Peterson added. "So that's all on track."

In his opening remarks, General Caldwell said that the "Iraqi security forces are the key to the success in this country, both the Iraqi army and the police forces, both the national and the local. ... that is a key ingredient ... for the coalition forces to draw down their presence."

However, Caldwell continued, the military and police components are not enough.

"It's going to take the commitment of the Iraqi government through governance, through economics and most importantly, the will and determination of the Iraqi people themselves," he said.

lated article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=August&x=20060809173744idybeekcm0.1926538>).)



Iraqi soldiers march carrying the Iraqi flag during a transfer of area ceremony south of Baghdad August 14. (©AP/WWP

Caldwell noted that Baghdad needs long-term solutions, and that the extremists there will be defeated neither easily nor quickly.

"Challenges will ensue, but efforts will march forward block by block," he said.

According to Caldwell, what really matters is businesses reopening and staying open, refurbishing the stalls in the marketplace section by section, improving drainage, removing rubbish and allowing children on summer break outside to ride bicycles and play. (See re-

Caldwell began the briefing by noting a series of explosions that occurred August 13 on the Karrada peninsula at the Zaaferaniyah district. In spite of speculation that the cause was a car bomb, he said, a U.S. explosive ordnance disposal team examined the site and made a preliminary assessment that an initial natural gas explosion led to subsequent explosions.

Further investigation is ongoing, Caldwell said, but available evidence so far points to an internal

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U.S. Initiative Seeks To Boost Fight Against Grand Corruption

By Andrzej Zwaniecki
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- A U.S. initiative to shut out corrupt high-level officials from the global financial system, deny them safe havens and recover and return proceeds from their crimes has been announced by the Bush administration.

"Our objective is to defeat high-level public corruption in all its forms and to deny corrupt officials access to the international financial system as a means of defrauding their people and hiding their ill-gotten gains," President Bush said in an August 10 statement.

The National Strategy to Internationalize Efforts Against Kleptocracy, as the initiative is called, is aimed at mobilizing the international community against large-scale corruption by high-level foreign public officials and coordinate global efforts to end it, according to a White House fact sheet.

A kleptocracy is a government in which officials seek status and personal gain at the expense of the governed.

Briefing reporters in Washington, Under Secretary of State Josette Shiner said the initiative builds on existing U.S. policies, including the 2004 executive order to deny safe haven to corrupt officials, and commitments made at the July Summit of Group of Eight countries in St. Petersburg, Russia.

But she said the national strategy takes the fight against high-level

corruption to a new level by involving U.S. foreign partners and financial institutions in more robust efforts to develop best practices for uncovering and seizing stolen funds, enhance information sharing and ensure greater accountability for development assistance.

According to the fact sheet, the administration also will beef up investigation and prosecution of U.S. private companies that bribe foreign officials and money-launderers that facilitate flows of embezzled money through the international financial system. In addition, it will seek to develop and promote mechanisms to uncover, capture and return stolen funds to their rightful owners.

In recent years, U.S. authorities have returned millions of dollars to Peru and Nicaragua that had been embezzled by those nations' former leaders.

Shiner said the initiative is part of U.S. drive to engage with all institutions that can have a role in eliminating high-level corruption, including the World Bank, which recently has launched an aggressive anti-corruption campaign.

According to the World Bank, \$1 trillion is paid every year in bribes and according to the United Nations, over \$400 billion has been looted from Africa alone and stashed away in foreign countries.

She said that, ultimately, kleptocracy is a development issue because high-level corruption undermines economic development and

renders the fight against poverty ineffective.

The administration does not have a list of former foreign officials and those that are still in power that will be targeted under the new initiative, she said.

"What we are saying today is we are putting kleptocrats on notice," Shiner said. "We want the world to not be a safe place for kleptocrats."

Identifying such corrupt officials, with help of U.S. international partners, will be one of the first actions of an interagency team headed by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, she added.

The full text (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/08/20060810.html>) of the president's statement and a White House fact sheet (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/08/20060810-1.html>) are available on the White House Web site.

*(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)**

U.S. Ambassador Condemns Attack on Shi'a Shrine in Najaf

By David Shelby
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad condemned the August 10 suicide attack against Shi'a Islam's holiest shrine, the Imam Ali Mosque in Najaf, Iraq. The attack killed at least 35 people and injured more than 120.

"I am appalled and saddened by today's terrorist attack at the Imam Ali Mosque in Najaf. I condemn in the strongest possible language this barbarous action, and offer my sincerest condolences to the victims. My thoughts and prayers are with the families who lost loved ones in today's heinous attack," the ambassador said in a written statement.

According to news reports, the attacker appears to have detonated his suicide belt at a police checkpoint just outside the mosque. The area was crowded with Shi'a pilgrims visiting the holy site in commemoration of the death of Zeinab, the granddaughter of the Prophet Muhammad.



Zalmay Khalilzad
U.S. Ambassador to Iraq

The shrine is dedicated to Ali bin Abu Talib, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad. Imam Ali assumed leadership of the Muslim community 24 years after the death of Muhammad, but was assassinated five years later. Shi'a Muslims believe he was the

divinely appointed successor of Muhammad and therefore consider him the first rightful imam. The name Shi'a is derived from Shi'at Ali, meaning followers of Ali.

Khalilzad urged Iraqis to unite in the face of this attack.

"The time has come for Iraqis to unite against terrorism. Terrorists are the enemies of Iraqi unity, security, democracy and prosperity. In addition to uniting, the best response to today's attack is for Iraqis with information about terrorist activities to provide it to the security forces," he said.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

Majority of Iraqi Police Trained, Equipped . . .

(Continued from page 10)

gas explosion that set off a series of other explosions at that location.

The transcript (http://www.mnf-iraq.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2111&Itemid=30) and video (http://www.mnf-iraq.com/images/stories/Press_briefings/2006/Aug/mg_caldwell_14aug06.wmv) of the briefing, as well as slides (http://www.mnf-iraq.com/images/stories/Press_briefings/2006/Aug/060814_slides.pdf) (PDF, 14 pages) used in the briefing, are available on the Web site of Multi-National Force - Iraq (<http://www.mnf-iraq.com/>).

For further information, see Iraq Update (http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/iraq.html).

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

Bush Calls For Patience, Resolve in Face of Terror Threats

Washington -- President Bush warned that the plot by more than 20 individuals in the United Kingdom to detonate liquid explosives

that although the arrests "have significantly disrupted the threat ... we cannot be sure that the threat has been eliminated."

achieve their goal of mass murder, while we have to succeed every time to stop them," he said.



President George W. Bush

aboard flights to the United States is "further evidence that the terrorists we face are sophisticated, and constantly changing their tactics." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-eng-lish&y=2006&m=August&x=20060810101148idybeekcm0.7115747>).)

Speaking in his weekly radio address to the American public August 12, Bush praised the arrests of the would-be terrorists as "the culmination of hard work, cooperation, and information-sharing across different agencies and different governments," but he said

Bush called for "patience, cooperation, and vigilance" on the part of travelers in the coming days, saying, "The inconveniences you will face are for your protection, and they will give us time to adjust our screening procedures to meet the current threat."

Liquids have been temporarily banned as carry-on items on all flights. In addition, U.S. authorities have raised the threat warning for flights from the United Kingdom to the United States to the highest level, "Code Red," and issued a "Code Orange," the second highest threat level, for all domestic and international flights landing in the United States. The president said additional U.S. federal air marshals have been sent to the United Kingdom to provide extra protection aboard flights to the United States. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-eng-lish&y=2006&m=August&x=20060810101148idybeekcm0.7115747>).)

The president said the United States "is safer than it was" prior to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, but the danger of terrorism remains.

"This week's experience reminds us of a hard fact: The terrorists have to succeed only once to

Bush called for "patience, courage, and untiring resolve," and said the terrorists seeking to kill innocent civilians "need to know that America, Great Britain, and our allies are determined to defend ourselves and advance the cause of liberty."

The full transcript (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/08/20060812.html>) of the president's radio address can be found at the White House Web site.

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U. S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

U.S. Names Two Syrian Generals as Terror Supporters

Washington – The U.S. Treasury Department August 15 froze the U.S.-based assets of two Syrian generals as a result of their support for terrorist organizations and their contributions to Syria's military occupation of Lebanon.

In his position with Syria's General Intelligence Directorate, Major General Hisham Ikhtiyar contributed to Syria's policies in Lebanon and provided support for Hezbollah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC), and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), the Treasury says.

Another Syrian military chief, Brigadier General Jama'a Jama'a, served as commander of Syrian military intelligence in Beirut.

Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorist Financing Pat O'Brien said Syria has promoted instability and violence in the region for decades.

"Until Syria takes concrete steps to become a responsible member of the international community, the United States will make known rogue actors supporting the country's destabilizing agenda," he said.

The executive order under which the generals are designated allows the Treasury Department to freeze the assets of anyone in Syria providing support to terrorist organiza-



Patrick M. O'Brien
Assistant Secretary for Terrorist
Financing

tions, contributing to Syria's presence in Lebanon, pursuing weapons of mass destruction or working to undermine U.S. stabilization efforts in Iraq. The order also prohibits U.S. persons from doing business with the designated parties. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/Archive/2006/Apr/05-801965.html>).)

The full text (<http://www.treasury.gov/press/releases/hp60.htm>) of a press release on the designation is available on the Treasury Department Web site.

For additional information, see Terrorist Financing (http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/terrorist_financing.html).

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>.)

Tracking Terrorists' Travels Essential To Stopping Future Attacks

By David McKeeby
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – The announcement from the United Kingdom that a plot existed to bomb U.S.-bound airliners highlights a key challenge in the global War on Terror: how to combat efforts by extremists to exploit the international travel system to plan and execute attacks.

On August 10, British authorities arrested 24 men believed to be linked to the plot, which reportedly involved the use of liquid explosives hidden in drinks, electronics and carry-on baggage to commit, in the words of Paul Stephenson, London's deputy commissioner of police, "mass murder on an unimaginable scale." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-eng-lish&y=2006&m=August&x=20060810101148idybeekcm0.7115747>).)

"Combating terrorist travel globally is a top national security priority," Admiral John Redd, director of the National Counter Terrorism Center, said May 2, releasing the National Strategy to Combat Terrorist Travel.

"Constraining terrorists' ability to move freely across borders overseas is critical to diminishing their potential to perpetrate acts of terrorism," the NCTC strategy document states.

The strategy's success, according to Redd, requires broadening international partnerships, deploying sophisticated new technologies, and strengthening the security of

travel documents, all while balancing the impact of increased security on individual rights and the flow of global commerce.

U.S. AIMS TO SHARE INTELLIGENCE, BUILD SCREENING CAPACITY

President Bush established the NCTC in August 2004 to bring together experts from across the U.S. government, to increase the exchange ideas and develop integrated strategies to fight terrorism.

Experts agree that this collaborative approach is well suited to the challenge, since constraining terrorists' freedom of movement requires the complementary skills of diplomatic, military, intelligence, and law enforcement agencies to be effective globally.

The NCTC's strategy for developing the partnerships needed to disrupt terrorist travel has three main components.

The first is to build cooperation among allies in collecting, analyzing and sharing intelligence about terrorist groups. Also featured in this component are special initiatives, such as the State Department's Terrorist Interdiction Program, which provides participating countries with access to a U.S. database of terrorist watch-list data. The program enables personnel at foreign air, land, and seaports to screen visitors more effectively. Another program is the Secure and Facilitated International Travel Initiative, an effort by the Group of Eight (G8) nations to develop international standards for

data exchange on travel documents and terrorist watch lists to make international travel more secure.

Second, the NCTC's strategy outlines support for partner states, as well as regional and international organizations such as the United Nations, INTERPOL, and the International Civil Aviation Organization, through assistance in upgrading border security systems to deny terrorists safe haven.

Among U.S. initiatives related to this element of the NCTC strategy are the State Department's Anti-terrorism Assistance Program and the G8's Counterterrorism Action Group, which both support countries willing to conduct, but unable to fully fund, counterterrorism efforts. Other initiatives feature training and technical security assistance, such as the State Department's International Law Enforcement Assistance program and the U.S. Coast Guard's International Port Security program.



The strategy also aims to deny terrorists access to the documents, funds and facilitation networks that allow them to travel. Since terrorists rely on falsified docu-

(Continued on page 23)

New Terrorist Attempts Amplify Pain, Impact of 1998 Attack

By Elisa Walton
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- On the same day that a thwarted plot to blow up commercial airliners bound for the United States came to light, State Department officials, employees and family members gathered to memorialize those killed eight years ago in terrorist attacks on U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

The ceremony, attended by many who witnessed the events in 1998, commemorated the bombings in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Nairobi, Kenya, that killed more than 220 people -- Africans and Americans -- and injured 4,000 more.

Under secretaries of state Henrietta Fore and Nicholas Burns gave tributes at the event, as did Ambassadors Prudence Bushnell and John Lange, who were the U.S. ambassadors to Kenya and Tanzania, respectively, in 1998. American Foreign Service Association President Tony Holmes also spoke, and Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer was in attendance as well.

In her remarks, Fore commented on the significance of that dark day. "We did not fully see it then, but ... it was the beginning of a [new] time, and we are all now witnesses to a changed world. It is a world that has new and deadly threats, and it was a day of trauma."

Other speakers also addressed the continuing threat of terrorism. According to Burns, "These attacks on August 7, 1998, revealed, for many Americans, Osama bin

Laden, and al-Qaida. And it is tragically ironic that as we attempt to come together today to make sense of what happened eight years ago, al-Qaida shows its face again in the potential attacks ... that were revealed this morning." (See related article (<http://>

around the world -- natives of the host countries who are employed by the embassies. He knew many of those who died, he said, from his four-year stint at the U.S. Embassy in Kenya in the 1980s.

Holmes also commended Bushnell



Bombing of U.S. Embassy in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, August 7, 1998.

At least seven people were killed and 72 hurt in the bombing in Tanzania.

Within minutes, another bomb blasted through the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya.

At least 74 people were killed and 1,643 wounded in the bombing in Kenya.

usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-eng-lish&y=2006&m=August&x=20060810101148idybeekcm0.7115747).)

Holmes underscored the service and the sacrifices that Kenyans and Tanzanians have made, and also gave tribute to the rest of the more than 39,000 "Foreign Service nationals" at U.S. embassies

and Lange for their work at the time. "It was ... your individual heroism and professionalism, and particularly your empathy, that brought together our employees," he said. "I think that if there was ever a model for New York City Mayor Giuliani, and what he did, in the aftermath [of the World Trade Center attacks of September 11, 2001], it was Ambassador Bushnell, in Nairobi."

(Continued on page 23)

Despite Progress, Children Remain Victims of AIDS

By Charlene Porter
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – An estimated 12 million children are at risk in Africa, orphaned or left vulnerable and impoverished by the AIDS epidemic, according to a report issued by the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) August 14.

This latest survey of the youngest victims of the epidemic is an update of an earlier report conducted in 2003, and is compiled by UNICEF, the Joint United Nations Programme of AIDS (UNAIDS) and the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

In sub-Saharan Africa, AIDS is the leading cause of death among young adults of child-bearing age. Their deaths are leaving behind youngsters who are threatened by poverty, lacking in education and guidance, and subject to marginalization and discrimination, according to Africa's Orphaned and Vulnerable Generations: Children Affected by AIDS.

In 10 of 45 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, 15 percent or more of all children were orphans in 2005. In Zambia alone, 20 percent of all children were orphans in 2005, one half of them due to AIDS, the report says. Care of these 1.2 million youngsters falls to Zambia's population of approximately 11 million.

Providing assistance to this vulnerable population has been a goal of PEPFAR, according to Kent Hill, assistant administrator of the Bureau for Global Health at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

"The President's Emergency Plan

for AIDS Relief has brought intense focus to families and children living with and affected by HIV/AIDS," said Hill August 14 in Toronto where the report was released at the XVI International AIDS Conference. "However, with the number of AIDS orphans still growing, there is much work to be done. By strengthening critical programs at the local level, the international community can ensure that orphaned and vulnerable children receive the care, support and protection they need."

PEPFAR is a five-year, \$15 billion program providing assistance to 120 nations, with special focus on 15 target nations especially hard-hit by HIV/AIDS.

In 2006, some \$217 million has been earmarked for programs to assist orphaned and vulnerable children, or 12.5 percent of the annual budget for the year. PEPFAR supported care for more than 1.2 million orphaned and vulnerable children in 2005. In a parallel effort, 75,000 adults have received training in the care of at-risk youngsters to achieve sustainable support for the 15 million children who are expected to have lost one or both parents by 2010.

The office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator has identified a number of priorities for services to sup-

port orphans and vulnerable children, including:

Strengthening the capacity of families to protect and care for youngsters by prolonging the lives of ailing parents and caregivers; Mobilizing and supporting communities to help in therapeutic and



Children at the Just Children Foundation for orphans in Harare, Zimbabwe, jump rope during play time April, 14, 2006. According to statistics almost one in three children in Zimbabwe are now orphaned having lost at least one parent to HIV and AIDS. (©AP/WWP)

socioeconomic assistance to needy households

Ensuring that vulnerable children have access to education, training, health care and other services.

Making sure that orphans are educated is viewed as a priority in the care of vulnerable children.

"One of the most effective ways to keep these children safe is to invest in education, especially for girls," said UNICEF Deputy Executive Director Rima Salah at the Toronto news conference.

The Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator has compiled a collection of case studies about the effec-

(Continued on page 21)

Effective AIDS Treatment in Reach but Barriers Remain

By Charlene Porter
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – Twenty five years after the first detection of the HIV virus, medical science has identified how effectively to treat and prevent infection, but extending those treatments and practices to almost 40 million people worldwide living with HIV/AIDS remains a challenge, according to a report released August 11 by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Mortality and Morbidity Weekly Report.

The report, prepared by CDC in collaboration with other U.S. and international health agencies, says that 2.8 million persons died from AIDS in 2005, and 4.1 million newly were infected with HIV.

The report was released two days before the opening of the XVI International AIDS Conference (August 13-18) to be held in Toronto. The biennial meeting sponsored by the International AIDS Society is the world's largest meeting focused on the disease. More than 25,000 people involved in research, health care, policy-making or activism are expected to attend, according to conference organizers.

THE REGIONS

"Southern Africa is the epicenter of the AIDS epidemic," according to the report. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to about 10 percent of the world's population, but 64 percent of all people with HIV/AIDS reside in the region.

Prevalence rates in four countries – Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Zimbabwe – exceed 20

percent, the report says. At the same time, declines in prevalence also have been documented in recent years, notably in Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe and urban areas of Burkina Faso.

In Asia, prevalence rates generally are lower than in Africa, with the disease largely confined to people engaged in various high-risk behaviors, such as sex workers, intravenous drug users or males who have sex with males.

By virtue of its large population of more than 1 billion people, India is now the nation with the single



largest number of HIV infected persons, about 5.7 million, the report says, while its prevalence rate – 0.9 percent -- is low compared to Africa's but varies by Indian state.

The Caribbean is the second most HIV-affected region of the world after sub-Saharan Africa. The epidemics in the two regions also are similar in that transmission is heterosexual, a pattern which will create a more generalized epidemic, epidemiologists have concluded.

Different access to treatment in each of these regions underscores the need to improve the delivery of

medicine to those who need it. In sub-Saharan Africa, 17 percent of the estimated number of persons who need anti-retroviral therapy (ART) received it. In Asia the rate is 16 percent, and in the Caribbean and South, and Central America, 68 percent.

TREATMENT AND SERVICES

Improving access to treatment and prevention requires more than shipping the right drugs to the right people. Complex social and cultural issues also are involved.

"Stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS," according to Dr. Anthony Fauci of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, "and sometimes community or even governmental denial of the disease, too often dissuade individuals from getting tested or receiving medical care."

Fauci wrote an editorial in the July 28 edition of *Science* magazine reflecting on 25 years of HIV/AIDS and the challenges that remain ahead.

"Women's rights remain elusive at best in many cultures. Worldwide, thousand of women and girls are infected with HIV daily in settings where saying no to sex or insisting on condom use is not an option because of cultural factors, lack of financial independence, and even the threat of violence."

Despite these challenges ahead, U.S. health officials also announced that progress is being made in the distribution of treatment and prevention due to U.S. and international efforts. In two-and-a-half years, the number of persons re-

(Continued on page 19)

Pediatric HIV/AIDS Handbook Helps Improve Care in Africa

Nearly 200,000 infants born each year in Africa are infected with HIV. About half of those young children die before reaching their second birthday.

In cooperation with the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is supporting an initiative called the African Network for Care of Children Affected by HIV/AIDS (ANECCA) to train health care professionals in the region.

Clinicians and social scientists come together with a commitment to make HIV prevention, treatment and care a reality for all children in Africa.

ANECCA also published the first Handbook on Pediatric AIDS in Africa -- a practical resource for all levels of health workers. The handbook was written by leading experts in pediatric HIV/AIDS care in Africa.

The first 5,000 handbooks were in such demand that a second print

run was necessary within four months.

In response to the demand for more information from health care professionals about caring for HIV-positive children, USAID helped ANECCA develop a training curriculum based on the handbook and held training sessions. Demand for both the handbook and training remains high. The ministries of Health in Kenya, Rwanda and Tanzania have adapted the curriculum for national workshops on HIV-infected children.

Health care professionals in Francophone Africa then requested a French translation of the publication. USAID helped sponsor the translation and a training workshop for representatives of 11 Francophone countries.

Workshop participants were excited to receive the information presented. One after another, they spoke out about how important the handbook is for Africa. "This is information that we need desperately to take care of our children,"

said Dr. Louise Wemin of Côte d'Ivoire.

"This handbook is excellent. It is practical, it is easy to use, the language is simple enough for all types of health workers to benefit from it," said Dr. Phillipe Mselatti of Burkino Faso.

"I love this handbook," said Dr. Déogratias Niyungeko of Burundi. "Those of us in the clinics will carry this in our pocket so that we can refer to it many times each day."

Since the publication of the handbook, ANECCA's role and visibility in Africa have grown tremendously. With help from USAID, pediatric expertise in HIV/AIDS in Africa is expanding and benefiting infected children throughout the region.

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

Effective AIDS Treatment in Reach but . . .

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ceiving ART climbed by 225 percent. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=August&x=20060809154709cmretrop0.7655451>).)

The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, a five-year, \$15 billion dollar program assisting 120 nations in combating the AIDS epidemic is a significant contributor

to that increase. (See related article (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/HIV_AIDS/hiv_aids_initiative.html).)

The MMWR report (<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5531a1.htm>) is available on the CDC Web site.

The Fauci editorial (http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/about/directors/pdf/Fauci_in_Science.pdf) in Science (PDF, 1 page) is available on the magazine's Web site.

For more on U.S. efforts to combat the epidemic, see HIV/AIDS (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/hiv_aids.html).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

Greenland's Ice Sheet Meltdown Accelerates

Washington – The meltdown of Greenland's ice sheet, a reservoir for 10 percent of the world's fresh water, is speeding up, according to data gathered in a joint U.S.-German scientific collaboration.

The latest findings from the Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment (GRACE) mission indicate that the shrinking of the ice sheet is occurring along Greenland's southeastern shoreline, where it might have the potential to affect weather in Western Europe.

The GRACE project, using twin satellites flying in formation over Earth, documented changes in the glaciers from 2002 to 2005, tracking acceleration in the speed of the melting in the last two years of that period.

GRACE is funded by NASA and the German Aerospace Center, and managed by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and the University of Texas Center for Space Research.

"Our latest GRACE findings are the most complete measurement of ice mass loss for Greenland," said University of Texas aerospace engineering professor Byron Tapley in a university press release. "The sobering thing to see is that the whole process of glacial melting is stepping up much more rapidly than before."

Greenland's ice sheet contains about 10 percent of the world's fresh water, and this study suggests that the amount of fresh water flowing from its meltdown could add 0.56 millimeters annually to a global increase in sea levels.

That additional amount of fresh water flowing into the sea could have consequences. The increased melt water, more buoyant than the salt water of the North Atlantic, could affect the flow of the Norwegian Current

"If enough fresh water enters the Norwegian Current," Tapley said,

studying changes in global sea level, polar ice mass, deep ocean currents and depletion and recharge of continental aquifers.

GRACE maps are up to 100 times more accurate than existing maps, substantially improving the accuracy of many techniques that oceanographers, hydrologists, gla-



This image shows the calving front, or break-off point into the ocean, of Helheim Glacier, located in southeast Greenland. The image, taken in May 2005, shows high calving activity associated with faster glacial flow. This glacier is now one of the fastest moving glaciers in the world.

Credit: NASA/Wallops

"then there could be climate effects in Europe." Launched in March 2002, GRACE tracks changes in Earth's gravity field. GRACE senses minute variations in gravitational pull from local changes in Earth's mass. GRACE maps these variations from month to month, following changes imposed by the seasons, weather patterns and short-term climate change.

Understanding how Earth's mass varies over time is important for

ciologists, geologists and other scientists use to study climate-influencing phenomena. For information on U.S. policy, see Environment (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/environment.html).

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

New Data Link Genetics, Ecology, Researchers Say

By Charlene Porter
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Scientific teams in the United States and Australia are discovering genetic links between plants and animals that share the same ecosystem, and they predict the work will open a new era in evolutionary biology – a biology subfield concerned with the origin of species and species' changes over time.

The teams found the genetic inheritance of an individual species in a biologic community not only determines the characteristics of that species but also affects the genetic characteristics that will be inherited in successive generations of surrounding species.

"We all know that sons and daughters carry traits that are passed on to them from their mothers and fathers," researcher Tom Whitham, professor of biological sciences at Northern Arizona University (NAU) told the Washington File. "We've been able to quantify the same the sort of heritability in terms of the commu-

nity and the ecosystem."

This finding gives new depth to the term "web of life," said Whitham, who led a team that included scientists with diverse specialties in ecology, forestry, plant science and entomology.

The discovery starts with the cottonwood tree, a variety common to the southwestern United States. It is what researchers call the foundation species in a riparian habitat – clusters of trees, shrubs, plants, insects and microbes that comprise riverside ecosystems in the arid region.

The cottonwood produces tannins – a substance widely found throughout the plant kingdom. Tannins are an astringent, whitish or yellowish substance that the plant produces to protect itself in various ways. Just as two family members have different physical characteristics, individual cottonwoods produce different levels of tannins.

Tannins affect the decomposition rate of cottonwood leaves, which

affects the fertility of soils, which affects the microbes in the soil, which affects insects that live in the soil, which affects the birds that live on the insects – right up the food chain.

So the genetic inheritance of the one foundation species (its genotype) can affect the biologic structure (the phenotype) of all other species in the system, according to the work published in two technical journals in recent months.

The research is funded by a grant from the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) and has involved more than 50 scientists from the United States, Canada and Australia.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY GENETICS RESEARCH

The Australian group, led by Brad Potts at the University of Tasmania, has established the same genetic linkage between species, studying an ecosystem in which the eucalyptus tree is the foundation species.

(Continued on page 22)

Despite Progress, Children Remain Victims . . .

(Continued from page 17)

tiveness of PEPFAR programs and how assistance has brought new promise to families suffering from loss and poverty because of HIV/AIDS.

UNAIDS and UNICEF have launched a targeted campaign for children. More information on this effort, Unite for Children (<http://www.unicef.org/uniteforchildren/>

[index.html](#)), is available on a U.N. Web site.

See Africa's Orphaned and Vulnerable Generations: Children Affected by AIDS. (http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_35314.html)

For ongoing coverage, see HIV/AIDS (http://usinfo.state.gov/global_issues/hiv_aids.html).
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New Data Link Genetics, Ecology, . . .

(Continued from page 21)

"Because Australia has a very different evolutionary history than North America," Potts said in an e-mail interview with the Washington File, "studies of an Australian eucalypt are important for understanding the overall generality of extended phenotypes of foundation species and have important implications for maintaining biodiversity."

The eucalyptus with which Potts and his team are working is a dominant tree in many Australian forests and a major hardwood plantation species in some regions, "making results of worldwide interest," he said.

Potts and Whitham discovered their common interest in the field of community genetics in 1989, and have been collaborating ever since.

THE IMPLICATIONS

The principles of ecosystem genetics have been proven in observations and experiments in biologic communities surrounding the cottonwood trees, Whitham said.

Future research is needed to determine how commonly this interrelationship among species occurs in other biologic communities, and whether ecosystem genetics is a phenomenon common throughout the natural world. Acknowledging that further work needs to be done, Whitham said the findings are sure to bring a new dimension to ecosystem science.

"Here we have a field that's never had a genetic perspective, and so [this research] almost has to change the way we view things

because the genetic linkages are there in a way that we never appreciated before," Whitham said, speaking from NAU's Flagstaff, Arizona, campus.

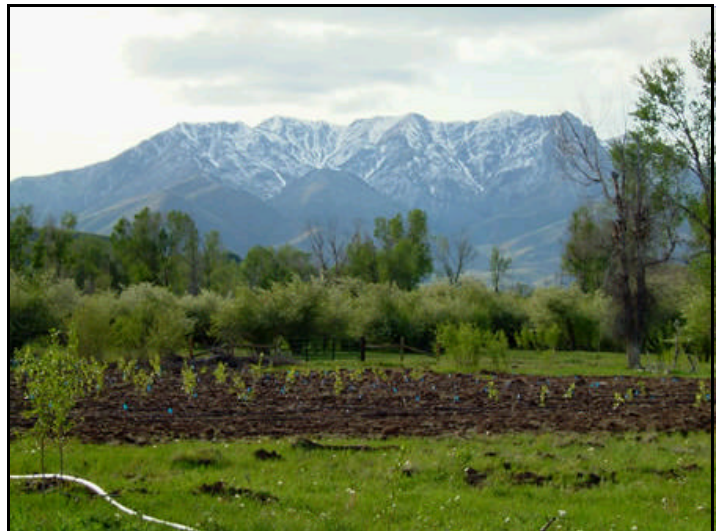
The NAU-led research team also is working with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in land conservation and species preservation projects in the American Southwest. Genetically diverse stands of cottonwood trees are being cultivated in an effort to create habitat that will support a broader array of bird and insect species.

Whitham said the findings on ecosystem genetics also are likely to bring new insights to science's understanding of how broadly human activities – such as fire, urbanization, climate change, and agriculture – all affect entire biologic communities.

"They all have the potential to favor one species over another, or specific genotypes within a species over one another," he said. "As these genotypes shift in response to all of these changes or one or more of these changes, there can be a genetic ripple effects that go throughout the whole community and ecosystem."

Publication of these findings have had a ripple effect of their own,

Whitham said. Members of his team have been contacted by researchers in an array of disciplines who are interested in pursuing the work.



A new experimental forest is underway to help NAU researchers understand interactions between genetics and community level ecosystem processes.

Inquiries have come from countries as biologically dissimilar as Sweden, South Africa and Indonesia, Whitham said, and exploratory talks are under way to launch related experiments in other countries.

Whitham welcomes the opportunity for other researchers working in diverse environments to provide further evidence that ecosystem genetics is a phenomenon occurring throughout the natural world.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)♦

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New Terrorist Attempts Amplify Pain, . . .

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Bushnell recalled that at this time eight years ago, she was standing at the airport tarmac under a brilliantly blue Kenyan sky, sending off flag-draped coffins.

Terror, "killing and maiming some in order to instill fear in others, is so unanticipated, so cruel and so arbitrary" that it is difficult to come to terms with, she said. "Whatever nationality we are, we are human beings first, and we respond in similar fashion to terrorist events. ... Killing people as a tactic for political influence is unacceptable."

Lange said that despite attempts at healing, he and others who were there would never be able to forget. With every new terrorist attack or attempt, the pain comes back, he said. Because of the August 10 attempts, he said, the attacks in East

Africa will again be in all the newspapers, as part of the list of recent terrorist incidents -- a reminder of the continuing danger and pain faced by citizens around the world.

The 1998 attacks also are linked symbolically to more recent attacks. A memorial service for the Africa attacks was held in Washington on September 11 of that year, a date that now has a new meaning.

Despite the somber tone, Burns sounded a note of hope: "The terrorists have failed. They brought down two of our embassies, then we rebuilt them. ... They didn't kill our spirit."

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Tracking Terrorists' Travels Essential To Stopping . . .

(Continued from page 15)

ments and financing networks, this element of the NCTC strategy places particular emphasis on working with international partners to develop and distribute travel documents containing advanced security technologies, new cargo-screening equipment and measures to track and freeze terrorist funding.

While terrorists' mobility has decreased since September 11, 2001, the NCTC concluded that they continually adapt to new security environments, and thus present new challenges. The national

strategy, according to Redd, "demonstrates that we are in this fight to win, and signals our aggressive pursuit of terrorists as they attempt to move around the world."

The strategy document (http://www.nctc.gov/docs/u_terrorist_travel_book_may2_2006.pdf) (PDF, 60 pages) is available on the National Counterterrorism Center Web site.

For additional information, see Response to Terrorism (http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/terrorism.html).

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